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DATE 2.7.05
SJ-8

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee

Hello, my name is David Jones, my home is over in the Bitterroot valley and I speak today as the parent of three daughters who progressed through Montana's education system, a system which would be harmed by those wishing to inject psuedo-science into our classrooms. One tactic of these folks has been to characterize evolution as Quote, just a theory, as somehow on equal footing with and therefore to be taught alongside other, competing, concepts ~~of creation~~ which explain the origin of the diversity of life ~~and development~~. They further attempt to portray the theory of evolution as vulnerable to scientific criticism, as somehow controversial, but what this approach depends upon is a general mis-understanding of the term theory as it is applied in science. Relativity, as described by Albert Einstein is "just a theory". Copernicus' notion that the earth orbits around the sun, which incidentally was not super popular with the religious establishment of that time, is also a theory. Continental drift is a theory. They are all, as author David Quammen put it; explanations confirmed by observation and experiment to such a degree that knowledgeable experts accept it as fact. Evolution, Darwin's theory which explains historical phenomenon through the mechanism of natural selection is supported by evidence that is abundant, various, ever increasing, solidly interconnected and easily available in museums, popular books, textbooks, and a mountainous accumulation of peer reviewed scientific studies. We are talking about a rigorous methodology using strict protocols, based on empirical data gathered in the most objective manner possible. Lots of hard work. Volumes of evidence exists within four main areas, biogeography, paleontology, embryology and morphology which are now joined by modern disciplines such as population genetics, bio-chemistry, molecular biology and most recently, genomics. These new forms of knowledge overlap one another seamlessly and intersect with the older forms, strengthening the whole edifice.

In Mississippi a bill calling for "the balanced treatment to the theory of scientific creationism and the theory of evolution" was introduced on Jan. 10th. Similar efforts are underway in Ohio, Pennsylvania and elsewhere. The folks behind these efforts promoting intelligent design creationism would like us to believe their concept is based on scientific principles, yet they are unable to demonstrate any such principles. They wish us to believe there is evidence disputing evolution yet they are unable to provide any. They want us to believe there is a controversy where none exists. This resolution, if passed, will make it clear that if you have a competing concept or wish to disprove an established theory you must use the scientific method, just as Darwin did and every other scientist must. You can do the work and provide evidence to support your hypothesis and just like everyone else you can submit your ideas to journals and they can be peer reviewed and if those ideas are any good they will make it into the literature and be taught in science classes. But we must ,as a state, make it clear that it is completely unfair to think that I or the Discovery Institute or anyone else can make an end run around this entire process and go straight to the students. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to this body.

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